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Navajo President Shelly to Congress: Do Your Job

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Speaking out against a potential federal government shutdown, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly expressed his dismay that Congress is failing to honor its trust responsibility to Native American tribes.

"It is unconscionable that the federal government will come to a complete halt due to a few unreasonable members of Congress. They have one primary role, to fund the government, and they need to do their job. By failing to provide funding, Congress is once again failing to honor its trust responsibility to America's first people," President Shelly said.

The Navajo people will see an immediate impact in their communities. Hospitals, law enforcement and social services will remain operational. Social Security benefits (both Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance) will continue to be disbursed uninterrupted. Other programs such as tribal colleges, some Indian Health Service units, and Head Start are not forward funded and will operate only if funds are currently available. There is no guarantee of federal reimbursement if tribes choose to self-fund.

"Much like sequester, once again Congress is placing ideology before the basic needs of American people," added President Shelly.

President Shelly also reiterated the Navajo Nation's need for fiscal restraint in uncertain economic environments.

"The Navajo Nation Council has repeatedly attempted to use up our reserves. I have sought to ensure that we have sufficient dollars to weather these types of crises through veto of budget line items. I recently vetoed more than \$8.7 million in unnecessary spending. I urge the Council to keep federal budget uncertainties, like the current possible shutdown, in mind when appropriating the Navajo people's money," President Shelly said.

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